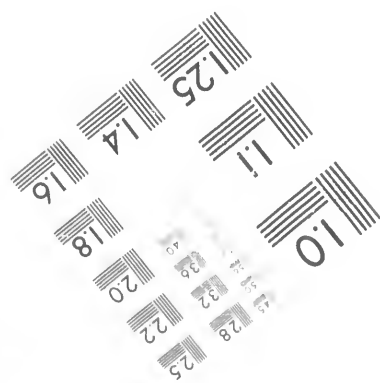
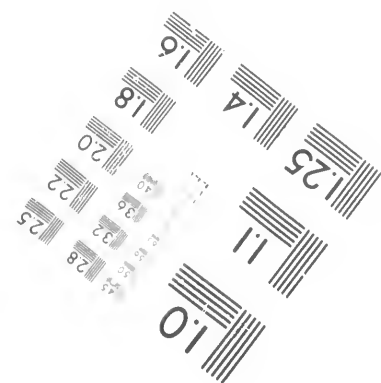
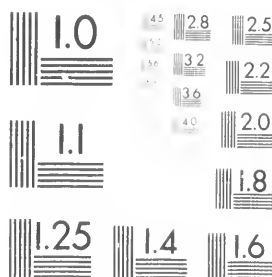


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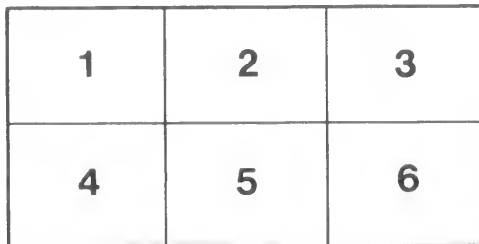
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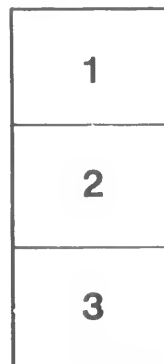
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IMPERIAL PENNY POSTAGE.

SPEECH

AT

MANCHESTER,

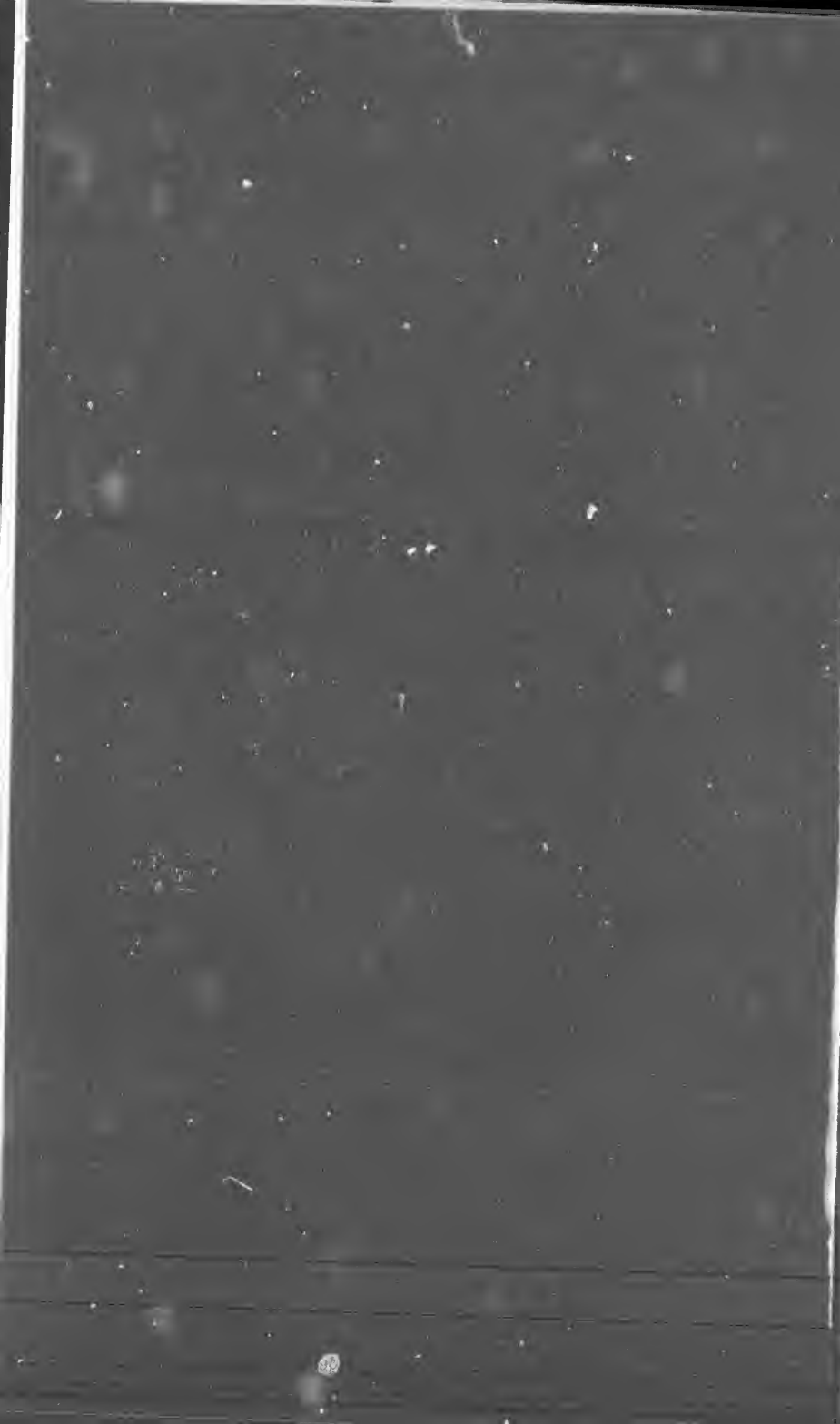
On May 2nd, 1892,

BY

J. HENNIKER HEATON, M.P.

FOR CANTERBURY.

18-12



IMPERIAL PENNY POSTAGE.

SPEECH

AT

MANCHESTER,

On May 2nd, 1892,

BY

J. HENNIKER HEATON, M.P.

FOR CANTERBURY.

1892

X

HARRISON AND SONS,
PRINTERS IN ORDINARY TO HER MAJESTY,
ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

IMPERIAL PENNY POSTAGE.

SPEECH AT MANCHESTER,

BY

MR. J. HENNIKER HEATON, M.P.

THE Quarterly Meeting of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce was held on Monday, May 2nd, 1892.

The President, Mr. J. THEWLIS JOHNSON, occupied the chair, and introduced the Member for Canterbury.

MR. J. HENNIKER HEATON, M.P., who, on rising, was received with loud applause, said:—

Gentlemen, I have spoken to numerous assemblages, of the most varied character, in all parts of the world, on the subject which I am to introduce to your notice to-day; but I have never done so with greater pleasure than on the present occasion. The heart of the United Kingdom beats and pulses

through your streets. You represent the activity, the wealth, and the enterprise, which have rendered this city illustrious in the industrial history of our race, and I feel that I am addressing an audience familiar with the great facts upon which the demand for cheaper postal communication is based ; and that it is unnecessary for me to do more than point out, briefly and clearly, the bearing of those facts upon my argument. I purpose to-day placing before you the case for the institution of Imperial Penny Postage ; that is, the system under which the Empire would become a single postal district, and a penny stamp would frank a letter, not merely from street to street, or county to county, but from one end of the Queen's dominions to the other—from Calcutta to Vancouver, from Edinburgh to Sydney. (Cheers.) I shall show that the actual cost of the carriage, that is, the sum which must be paid in order to yield a fair profit to the carrier, of a single letter, half-way round the globe, by sea and land, by railway and steam packet, is but the fraction of a penny. I shall illustrate the unparalleled proportions of the British Empire, and the amazing growth of its trade, its shipping, and its commerce. I shall point out the supreme importance of encouraging correspondence between our countrymen in the United Kingdom, and their friends and relations in the Colonies, together with the keen stimulus which cheap postage invariably administers to trade. Finally, I shall draw attention to the remarkable consensus

of public opinion in favour of the reform advocated, and I shall place before you three points that are not disputed : first, that Her Majesty's subjects are calling unanimously for this reform ; secondly, that it would have a most beneficial influence on our trade, and on Imperial relations ; and thirdly, that no increased expenditure would be involved. (Hear, hear.)

MY PROPOSAL.

What I propose, is that a letter shall be conveyed from any point in the United Kingdom to any other part of the British Empire for a penny. I shall show that there would be no permanent loss under such a system, and that, on the contrary, it would eventually, like Inland Penny Postage, prove highly profitable to the State. Let me point out at once that I make no proposal as to the return post from the Colonies. That is the business of the Colonial Governments ; and we have absolutely nothing to do with it. At the same time, I am able to assert, from information supplied to me by Colonial Postmasters-General, that our example would certainly be followed, and that a return penny post would in all cases be established to this country. Let the parent duck take to the water, and the timid ducklings will quickly follow her. (Cheers.)

POSITION OF ENGLAND.

On glancing at the map of the world, it will be seen that these British Islands, outposts of Europe in the stormy Atlantic, are, geographically speaking, the nucleus or centre of the habitable globe. Our shores can be approached from east, west, and south by fleets that bear to us the produce of every cultivable territory; and every day, from the Mersey, the Thames, and the Clyde, long lines of stately steamships pass out laden with the products of your looms, and the thousands of varieties of articles required for the comfort and assistance of man, civilised or uncivilised, in the four quarters of the globe. (Hear, hear.)

EXTENSION OF THE EMPIRE.

Within the last few years our Sovereign's dominions have been increased nearly one-fifth by African Protectorates. Her subjects number 343,000,000, and their trade amounts to 1,218,000,000*l.* per annum. Our merchants own nearly 12,000,000 tons of shipping, or more than half the total tonnage afloat, and our commerce is protected by some 500 ships of war. 700,000 red-coats barely suffice to garrison the strategic points of

the Empire. Our language is spoken by 100,000,000 of men, 50,000,000 more understand it, though they do not habitually employ it, and it bids fair to become the Volapuk, or universal medium of communication. For extent, for wealth, for population, for power, there never was before, there cannot be again, such an Empire as this of Queen Victoria. But the danger of disruption arises from its very magnitude. An army spread out in line may be broken through at any point; and to obviate this danger the troops are trained to concentrate, on a given signal, at the threatened spot. This would be impossible without the feeling so accurately expressed by the phrase *esprit de corps*, which teaches the soldiers that safety consists in standing by one another, whenever and wherever the attack comes. It is precisely this sentiment—an Imperial *esprit de corps*—which Ocean Penny Postage is calculated to develop. This scheme will rally and concentrate the diverse nationalities, conflicting creeds, and divergent interests, spread over three-fourths of our planet, which are collectively known as the British Empire. We must, in short, make communication by letter as cheap and easy between England and New Zealand, or any nearer colony, as between England and Ireland—as between Manchester and Liverpool. I say we *must*. (Hear, hear.) If we cannot promote, or rather create—for it does not now exist—such inter-communication of ideas and sympathies amongst the detached masses that make up the British Empire,

we shall float on in selfish isolation, like a powerful squadron in a fog, and, sooner or later, share the fate of the Roman, the Spanish, and the Napoleonic Empires. (Cheers.)

THE EMIGRATION PHASE.

While our strength has apparently kept pace with our wealth, the truth is that our relative importance in the world, apart from our connection with the Colonies, has greatly diminished during the present century. The consolation for us lies in the fact that we see our young Colonies shooting up into formidable Powers all about us. We are pouring our very life-blood into their veins. Year by year from 250,000 to 300,000 of our finest young men swarm out from these shores to the Colonies, never to return, and bearing with them tender recollections of the Old Country. What are we doing to retain the affection and loyalty of these men? Why do we persist in maintaining obstacles to all communication between them and their friends here? I can give some striking figures showing the love and regard these people have for the "Old folks at Home."

Last year we received in the United Kingdom in small money orders from the English-speaking

racés of the world, and from our kinsmen abroad the following amounts :—

	£
Africa (South and West) ...	91,985
Australia	346,337
Canada	215,598
The Cape	165,064
India	180,645
New Zealand	70,710
West Indies	196,251
Other Colonies	76,196
United States	1,115,789

£2,458,575

This large sum represents chiefly the earnings, self-denial, and natural affection of British emigrants who have recently gone out from their native villages, and who, amid their own struggles and privations, think of the wants of the "Old folks at Home." (Cheers.) But for want of cheap postage, communication becomes less and less frequent, and too often ultimately ceases altogether. I repeat, there is practically no correspondence—there is almost the silence of death—between the masses at home and the masses in the Colonies. Yes, the emigrant is too often as one dead to his family in the Old Country; and our rulers are content to let this state of things go on.

A POOR MAN'S QUESTION.

This is a poor man's question *par excellence*. The poor man is obliged to count his pence before parting with them. If he writes a letter from Lancashire to a son or cousin across the ocean, he does something to bind that son or cousin to the Old Country, and thus he serves the State. How foolish it is to fine him two or three times the cost of sending his letter for the heinous crime of indulging in this outburst of natural affection! In how many homes has that affection been chilled and extinguished by the niggardly policy of our Government in this respect! As it is, we have sacrificed for many years past a profitable source of revenue, for as I have said, the masses at home and in the Colonies practically do not correspond at all. Whether we overload a camel or a taxpayer, Nemesis will surely attend us; rapacity and inhumanity will bring their own punishment. (Applause.)

FOREIGN COMPETITION.

My second contention is, that we should give our merchants an immediate and decisive advantage over their foreign rivals in the Colonial market, in

the shape of a low postal rate. Business men will appreciate the boon of being able to write to customers and agents at two-fifths of the rate which their foreign competitors have to pay. Again, a penny rate would set the masses corresponding, and this state of things would in turn stimulate the Colonial taste for British goods. To that Colonial trade, in my judgment, we must ultimately look for the subsistence of our home-working population, for every foreign market is being closed against us in turn by hostile tariffs. The State cannot do much to help our merchants, but it can give them this advantage of Imperial Penny Postage, and it ought not to hesitate for an hour. Let me illustrate the competition I speak of. Ten years ago, when I came to England, there was no Messageries Maritimes service to Australia. Last year I came home from Sydney in one of the splendid vessels which the great French company runs to the Island-Continent. That ship was of 6,000 tons burden; she is as swift as any British boat, yet not swifter than some of her sister ships. She was stuffed from stem to stern with merchandise, and it even overflowed her hold on to the deck. She must have carried goods to the value of 250,000*l.* to Marseilles.

THREE COURSES OPEN.

I must here point out the differences between the three systems of Penny Postage which are before the public. Some years ago, I proposed in the House of Commons a motion for Universal Penny Postage, and 142 Members voted for it. This, of course, implied an agreement with foreign Governments for a common postal charge of 1*d.* from any part of the civilised globe to any other. But I have found it expedient, in the first place, to get Penny Postage for the British Empire, and this may be had in two ways. We may have what is called "Imperial" Penny Postage, which involves the conveyance of our mails to the Colonies by the quickest routes both *by sea and by land*, or we may have Ocean Penny Postage, under which system our mails would reach the Colonies entirely by sea. Now, mark this. In the cases of Canada, the West Indies, South America, and South Africa, Ocean Penny Postage is the only possible plan. But with respect to India, the East, and Australasia, we gain several days by sending the mails across Europe, by rail, to be taken on board at Brindisi, instead of sending them round by Gibraltar. To Ocean Penny Postage no objection has yet been raised. Even the late Mr. Raikes became, before his death, a convert to the idea. He could not resist the fact that the actual cost of conveying a letter, by sea, for any possible distance on this planet, does not exceed $\frac{1}{4}$ *d.*, leaving $\frac{3}{4}$ *d.* for the Post Office.

THE TWOPENNY-HALFPENNY RATE.

Why should any man pay $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ when $1d.$ postage will be sufficient? (Cheers.) Although unable to object openly to Imperial Penny Postage on the ground of cost, the postal officials maintain that the reform is unnecessary, as the present Government has instituted a uniform postal rate of $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ to the Colonies, and that is low enough. Yes, it is low enough for a well-to-do official, or wealthy trader, but it is still one and a-half times higher than the inland rate, and one and a-half times higher than the actual cost of transit to the Colonies, as we have seen, would justify. This rate of $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ per letter was instituted in answer to my repeated complaints that we were forced to pay $5d.$ for a letter to India, and $6d.$ for a letter to Australia, while foreigners paid but $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ per letter. Here was a scandalous anomaly, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer found himself compelled, by the public opinion I had aroused, to redress it. But he cannot, therefore, plume himself upon having done any great thing for us. The foreigner enjoyed an advantage over us for many years, and although this reduction abolishes anomalies, against which I have long protested, it gives our trading classes no advantage whatever over the foreigner in the matter of writing to the Colonies. But my fundamental objection to the view that we should be content with the new rate, is that it does not go far enough to reach and benefit

the millions of our poor countrymen who have relations in other parts of the world, or the emigrants themselves. It is like a bridge completed all but one arch, which still leaves a yawning and impassable chasm. (Cheers.) It betokens either a lack of financial courage, or deficient confidence in the future of the Empire. (Hear, hear.) The $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ rate only relieves those who must write, at all costs; it does not tempt others to write. The poor find it still too high for their pockets. A really popular rate must be the same as the familiar domestic rate of everyday life; if it be higher, it will not be popular—it will not reach the masses. (Hear, hear.)

BRITISH TRADERS.

In writing to Lord Salisbury on this question, I pointed out that it is the highest policy to give our commercial men the cheapest possible postage to the outer world. I continued my letter in these words:—

“We have also to remember that hitherto our manufacturers have been severely handicapped in the competition with European rivals for Colonial trade by the heavy postal rates which they have had to pay, amounting to double the rates charged to the foreigner. A year and a-half ago they were placed, by the new $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ rate, on a level in this respect with

the rest of the world. But is not some compensation due to them for the injustice which they have so long been forced to endure? (Hear, hear.) There are numerous industries which depend to a great extent on the existence of a cheap postal service, and there are none which may not be immensely stimulated and facilitated by such an agency. It is a policy worthy of your lordship's enlightened and patriotic character to provide British merchants with the means of writing to their Colonial agents and customers two and a half times as often as German, French, or other foreign mercantile men can address their correspondents in our Colonies." (Applause.)

LAVISH POSTAL EXPENDITURE.

It is time to say something on the subject of the immense sums paid to the mail steamer companies every year out of postal revenue. These subsidies, amounting this year to about 650,000*l.*, are ostensibly levied on the Post Office to defray the charges for the carriage of our mail-bags to various foreign and Colonial ports. But a schoolboy of ten would discover, after five minutes' calculation, that the mere cost of carriage is but a small proportion of these subsidies, and the question arises, "What are they paid for?" Various official reports of Post-

masters - General and Parliamentary Committees inform us that they are paid for four distinct objects, (1) the conveyance of the mails, (2) to foster the shipbuilding trade, (3) to create an auxiliary naval force, and maintain a reserve fleet of cruisers ready for the event of war, and (4) to preserve England's commercial supremacy on the seas. Obviously the second, third, and fourth objects should be attained out of the general taxation of the country, leaving the first only chargeable to the Post Office. As a matter of fact, however, the total sum payable to secure all four purposes is set down as the cost of conveying mail-bags; and we are told by postal officials that since the transportation of mail-bags is so expensive, Imperial Penny Postage cannot pay. To illustrate what I say. We contribute 280,000*l.* per annum to the Indian mail steamer services, though the postage earned does not exceed 80,000*l.* Up to 1858 these services were charged to the Admiralty, and were transferred to the Post Office estimates against the strong protests of Lord Canning and the Postmasters-General of subsequent years. (Hear, hear.)

And the wrong continues. Three months ago the postal estimates of this country were burdened with an additional 60,000*l.* as a subsidy for a mail service from Vancouver to Hong Kong. The postage receipts cannot exceed 500*l.* a year. I told the Chancellor of the Exchequer it was a scandalous thing to saddle the Post Office with this fresh

expenditure, not required by the Post Office. He admitted the wrong, but confessed his inability to find any other department on which it was so convenient to charge the expenditure, though it was placed on the estimates to encourage trade between British America and British India and China.

I wish, however, to make it clear that I am strongly in favour of subsidies. I do not think Great Britain pays enough in steamship subsidies. We now pay 650,000*l.* a year, while France, with only a few poky colonies, pays 26,000,000 francs, or over a million sterling a year in subsidies. What I ask is that our subsidies should be fairly apportioned between the Post Office and other Government departments. (Hear, hear.)

A JUST RATE FOR CARRIAGE OF MAILS.

One penny per letter is 300*l.* per ton. I propose to pay from postal revenue 100*l.* per ton for the conveyance of letters, or less than $\frac{1}{2}d.$ per letter. As the steamships carry valuable merchandise for 2*l.* per ton, it is clear that the owners would realise a very handsome profit on the transaction; and, of course, they would receive the balance of their subsidies as at present—only not out of postal revenue.

Our present mail contracts with the Peninsular and Oriental Company and the Orient Steam

Navigation Company, and the contracts for the conveyance of the South African, Canadian, and West Indian mails, are made irrespective of weight. The companies ask and obtain a fixed subsidy, and it is a matter of indifference to them whether we send 50,000 or 500,000 letters by a particular ship. This fixed subsidy system is a fair and honourable way of dealing with steamship companies. (Hear, hear.)

But, as I shall presently show, our postal contracts with the United States reflect no credit on our Government. We pay 3s. per lb. for our letters to America, and only 3d. a lb. for our newspapers. Without distinction bags of letters and newspapers are thrown into the hold like bags of potatoes. The Yankees, however, get their letters sent to this country for 1s. 8d. per lb., often in the same British steamship.

PENNY POSTAGE FOR NEWSPAPERS.

Let this be borne in mind. We already enjoy Imperial—or rather, Universal—Penny Postage for newspapers. A copy of the *Times*, weighing 4 oz., can be sent to Sydney or Melbourne for 1d. A letter weighing $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. sent in the same bag and the same ship which contains the newspaper costs 1s. 8d. in postage. We only ask that the letter should be carried for the same sum as a newspaper of eight times its weight. (Cheers.)

THE VESTRY AT ST. MARTIN S-I-E-GRAND.

Our Postal officials are blind to the necessity of encouraging correspondence with the Colonies. It is as difficult to get a return of such correspondence out of them as to get a tooth out of a wolf's jaw. Any and every attempt on my part to extract information is received with persistent snarling and snapping. Yet but for the pertinacious questioning of which I have been guilty, the public would now be utterly in the dark as to the real facts. The most absurd mystery is made of the matter.

ENGLISH *v.* FOREIGN STATISTICS.

It is curious to compare the great attention bestowed upon foreign correspondence in the United States Postmaster-General's Annual Report, with the contemptuous, studied indifference shown to the subject in the British Postmaster-General's Report. In the meagre British Return for 1891 of 70 pages, painful efforts are apparently made to avoid allusion to Foreign and Colonial mail business. and the whole document is of an unmistakably parochial character. Of the 1097 pages in the comprehensive volume of Mr. Wanamaker, no less than 90 pages, or 20 more than the entire report

of Mr. Raikes, are devoted to statistics and other information, showing, with obvious pride on the part of the compiler, the growth of, and the increased expenditure upon the foreign mail service of the United States.

THE INCREASE OF CORRESPONDENCE.

This brings me to another argument in favour of Imperial Penny Postage. It is that of the increase of correspondence. The present rate of postage to all our Colonies and dependencies is $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ per letter. It follows, *cæteris paribus*, that if the present volume of correspondence can be made one and a half times larger, the amount of revenue will be the same. (Cheers.)

Who will venture to maintain that such an increase could not be looked for? Why, the American mails to this country were three times greater in 1889 than in 1879, the Canadian mails were nearly four times greater in 1887 than in 1879, and the Australian mails have (notwithstanding the crushing $6d.$ rate) more than doubled in ten years. I have obtained and append official statistics from the Postmasters-General of the various Colonies and India to prove this portion of my case.

Only on one memorable occasion did the Postal officials venture to put in the mouth of the

Postmaster-General the argument that the "area of productivity" did not justify the extension of Penny Postage to the Colonies. It was curiously enough on the occasion of the banquet to celebrate the jubilee of the introduction of the Penny Post in England. "How can we expect increase of correspondence, say from India?" said the Postmaster-General. I at once telegraphed to India for the statistics on the point. The answer given me by Mr. Fanshawe, the able Postmaster-General of India, was that the total number of all articles sent to and from India through the post in 1872 was 4,728,503, while in 1888 no less than 17,042,721 articles were exchanged. (Cheers.) In letters alone the increase was from one million to three and a half millions. (Applause.) I have heard nothing more of this argument, from the authorities at St. Martin's-le-Grand.

In connection with this matter, it is significant that whereas the annual rate of increase in our inland correspondence is only 3 per cent., the corresponding increase of correspondence from the Colonies is from 10 to 100 per cent. (Hear, hear.)

THE COST OF ESTABLISHING PENNY POSTAGE.

The official estimate given (in the House of Commons) is that it would cost 75,000*l.* to establish

Imperial Penny Postage for the first year. I always maintained that it would not involve an expenditure of 25,000*l.* Yet I am content with the official estimate. I at once set about to find means to save or make the sum thus required to establish Imperial Penny Postage, although I could not hide from myself the fact that the sum in question was about the price paid for a single picture for the National Gallery, and that the cost of a single warship would defray the expense of Penny Postage for about ten years. (Loud cheers.) A good warship now costs 750,000*l.* Warships protect our commerce; cheap postage creates it; and we can well afford both.

I had already exposed the Post Office Stationery Contract by which the contractor had been pocketing 60,000*l.* a-year *above a fair profit*, and he had under pressure consented to take 40,000*l.* a-year less, but this did not count in official eyes. I have also pointed out two other ways of saving the amount.

THE CALAIS-BRINDISI SCANDAL.

First, I exposed the infamous bargain under which the French and Italian Governments, while charging us 100,000*l.* a-year, or 1*d.* per letter, for carrying our Indian and Australian mails between Calais and Brindisi, were allowed to get the work done by their railway companies for 40,000*l.*, and to pocket the balance of 60,000*l.* Our brilliant postal manage-

ment made this treaty, for which some official bungler ought (of course in a metaphorical sense) to be hanged. (Laughter and cheers.) The officials never revealed this system of plundering to Parliament. They quietly deducted the amount from receipts, and returned the balance as the actual revenue, without a word about the appropriation of 60,000*l.* Well, here is 60,000*l.* towards the required 75,000*l.*

AN ALTERNATIVE.

Now, we might either send our mails to the Mediterranean, *via* Salonica, avoiding France and Italy altogether, or we might increase the speed of the vessels which perform the voyage from our shores, past Gibraltar and Suez, to India and Australia. At present, those vessels under contract must cover the distance in thirty-four days, and are bound to a speed of only $11\frac{3}{4}$ knots per hour; as a matter of fact, they often do the distance in four days under contract time, and last week, without difficulty, they delivered the letters in seven days under contract time. Now, it would be a good stroke of business for us to pay half of the 100,000*l.* appropriated by France and Italy to the steamship owners, exacting, in return, a greater rate of speed—say, 16 or 17 knots per hour—which would be agreed to immediately, and we should have our mails carried all the way by sea in less than the

present contract time. Of course, I only use this argument to show that we are not bound to submit to the fleecing of which I complain without a breath of remonstrance. (Hear, hear.) Or we might send our letters by the ordinary express trains at 4 francs, in place of 10 francs per kilogramme.

A second, and equally flagrant, case of official extravagance, is pointed out in my letter to Lord Salisbury, in connection with the American mails. I travelled to America in the "Majestic," and the British Government paid the owners 1,000*l.* for conveying the mails on that occasion to New York. I returned in the "Majestic," but the American Government only paid the owners of this vessel 500*l.* for conveying an equal quantity of mails from New York to Queenstown. Well, there are two or more mails a week to America, and at least 50,000*l.* a-year is lost to the British Government by these contracts.

NO EXTRA EXPENSE.

One other point we should not forget. It is this: that the establishment of Imperial Penny Postage will not involve the employment of an extra train, steamship, or letter-carrier, either here, or in the Colonies; and, in a word, that the present machinery is ample to deal with the possible increase of letters from, and to, the English-speaking countries of the world. (Cheers.)

EXCHANGE OF LETTERS.

Another objection raised, is that Penny Postage is impossible, because each country ought to have one penny per letter, and so the postage ought to be twopence. The answer is very simple. Will any one say that it costs more to send a letter from here to France than from here to Ireland? A great confusion, too, arises on the question of delivery. If I get 10,000,000 letters in Liverpool from London for delivery on board a ship there, bound for New York, and receive in exchange there 10,000,000 letters from New York for delivery in London, both in sealed bags, I shall have to deliver to the parties to whom the letters are addressed only 10,000,000 letters, and not 20,000,000 letters. I shall have received the penny postage, in other words, on 10,000,000 letters which I have collected and delivered. It is really one transaction, plus the cost of sea conveyance. I trust I have made the matter clear: that sending 10,000,000 letters to be delivered in another country, and in exchange delivering 10,000,000 letters from another country, only amounts to one transaction. Another advantage we get—or at least the Chancellor of the Exchequer gets—is in exchange. Under the Postal Union every country keeps its own postage, and the country to which the letters are sent undertakes the delivery without charge. But we in England

send away to foreign parts five letters on which the Chancellor of the Exchequer of England receives full postage, and we receive from abroad only four letters on which the foreign Chancellors of the Exchequer receive postage. England made last year a quarter of a million sterling by this little transaction. Let us, then, listen no more to this stupid argument that we should have twopence on every letter.

To put the matter another way. There are two main sources of expenditure—for collection and distribution; the cost of carriage being comparatively unimportant. Now, on our outgoing letters we are saved the cost of distribution, and on incoming letters the cost of collection. Practically, therefore, it is but one transaction, as above contended. (Hear, hear.)

DOES THE POSTAL UNION STOP THE WAY?

Driven from every position, the authorities at St. Martin's-le-Grand at last put up the late Postmaster-General to say that the Postal Union did not permit of Imperial Penny Postage being established. I waited until the approach of the next ensuing Postal Union Congress, and in a series of letters to Lord Salisbury and the Postmaster-General, I asked them to demand freedom for England to communicate with her

Colonies at the penny rate. It happened that Lord Salisbury had just denounced "unfortunate" treaties with foreign countries, which prevented our making special terms with our Colonies, and I was not slow to seize the opportunity of impressing Lord Salisbury's views on the postal authorities. At the termination of the Vienna Postal Union Congress in July of last year, Mr. Raikes called me to his room and informed me of the good news that England had obtained her freedom in this respect. (Cheers.)

A few days afterwards I put a question in the House of Commons to the Postmaster-General (at his request) on the subject, and his answer was officially vague, but satisfactory. If we had not obtained the concession we were prepared to move the adjournment of the House of Commons, because it was a monstrous thing that any foreigner should prevent our corresponding with our people in every part of the British dominions at any rate we chose to fix. (Loud cheers.)

HOW POST OFFICE FUNDS ARE ADMINISTERED.

I desire to speak with the greatest possible respect of your Postmaster-General. But I think we might ask him how he can defend his present method of keeping his accounts and the administration of the funds. He receives over 13,000,000*l.* a-year out of the Post Office, and he makes con-

siderably over 3,000,000*l.* a-year profit. The greatest economists have laid it down as unwise, that this profit, or any profit, should be made out of the Post Office. However, we have to put up with the demands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But on what ground does the Postmaster-General defend the payment out of the current revenue of the cost of buildings? Now, I think Liverpool deserves, and is entitled to, and is worthy of, one of the finest post-offices in the United Kingdom. But the contribution of 175,000*l.* *out of this year's income* for the cost of a new postal building at Liverpool cannot be defended. This vicious system of paying for sites and permanent buildings out of income ought to be put an end to once for all by the right hon. gentlemen. Here is a building at Liverpool intended to last at least a century, and, therefore, the taxpayers of this year should, in justice, pay but one-hundredth part of its cost. But they have been made to pay the whole of that cost, and to endow posterity (which, as the Irishman said, "has done nothing for them"), with a palace that will last for generations. (Hear, hear.) Such transactions as these prevent the immediate establishment of a boon to millions, and deprive the peoples of this vast Empire of a service urgently demanded by public opinion, and of the utmost consequence to their welfare and happiness.

Gentlemen, I almost think it an insult to your intelligence to further argue the question of how

to get the 75,000/. It is a bagatelle, compared with the trade we do, of over one thousand millions. (Loud cheers.) Yet cheap communication is the very life and soul of this trade. It strikes one as astonishing, that any Minister should haggle about this expenditure (which would be swept away in two or three years), an expenditure which would do so much to weld a dozen great nationalities into one invincible Empire. (Applause.)

A BANK GUARANTEE AGAINST LOSS.

Having exhausted every means in my power to persuade the authorities to introduce Penny Postage, there remained but one course open, viz., to give a Bank Guarantee to the Chancellor of the Exchequer against loss through the introduction of Penny Postage, and this I did. (Loud cheers.) Incredible as it may appear, Mr. Goschen declined my offer, but he gave no reasons for his refusal, or to be strictly accurate, he said, while recognising and appreciating the proof of sincerity which the offer implied, he could not accept it for a variety of reasons, with which, however, he would not trouble me. (Laughter and cheers.)

Gentlemen, in conjunction with two wealthy friends, I prepared this guarantee at considerable pecuniary inconvenience, and I think I was entitled

to more generous treatment at the hands of the Government. (Hear, hear, and applause.)

I may point out that there is nothing unusual or irregular or unconstitutional in offering this Bank Guarantee. The Postmaster-General every week accepts guarantees from private persons against loss by the establishment of local telegraph offices, and this is an analogous case. Last year between 19,000*l.* and 20,000*l.* was guaranteed. (Hear, hear.)

You will now see, gentlemen, that I have exhausted every means to induce the Government to grant this boon to the people.

In the last resort I now appeal to Manchester to demand Imperial Penny Postage in the name of British trade, and in the name of the mute and friendless millions who have seen their sons and daughters pass out into the darkness. (Cheers.)

It is universally admitted that the extension of the benefits of Sir Rowland Hill's scheme to the whole of Her Majesty's possessions and to the United States would lead to a large and timely development of our commerce; that it would confer widespread happiness on our poor, and on their emigrant sons and brothers, who are constantly adding to the wealth and power of the British dominions; and that by cultivating and intensifying the feelings of natural affection and friendship, which unite vast numbers of Her Majesty's subjects in various parts of the world, it would effectually counteract the dissolvent influences of distance,

prejudice, and conflicting interests on the Empire.
(Loud cheers.)

A VOTE OF THANKS.

After several questions had been asked a cordial vote of thanks was accorded.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON, M.P., in reply, said: In thanking you for the vote you have given me, I repeat that I hardly think too much importance can be attached to the question of obtaining Imperial Penny Postage. The granting by England of Imperial Penny Postage would send a thrill of kindly feeling through the Empire (cheers); and as I have often pointed out, it would be the most acceptable, the least expensive, and the most popular gift the Government could make to the people. The millions of inhabitants of India, and the Australasian, the Canadian, and South African peoples, would recognise in it a wish to place them on an equality with England herself. (Cheers.)